



## Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/52/Rev.1  
2 October 2012

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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### CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Eleventh meeting  
Hyderabad, India, 8-19 October 2012  
Item 5.2 of the provisional agenda\*

### **TOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY: REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

*Note by the Executive Secretary<sup>1</sup>*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, ranking fourth after fuels, chemicals and food. According to new research from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the global Travel & Tourism industry is double the size of automotive manufacturing and approximately one-third larger than chemicals manufacturing, sustaining 255 million jobs in 2011, 1 in 12 of all jobs in the world<sup>2</sup>. For many developing countries, tourism is one of the main sources of income and the number one export category, creating employment and opportunities for development.

2. Emerging economy destinations have grown faster than other destinations, and tourism is one of the most viable and sustainable economic development options. It can make a significant contribution to address not only economic, climate, and poverty alleviation, but also biodiversity. Despite economic challenges in many markets, tourism receipts for 2011 are estimated at US\$ 1,030 billion worldwide, an increase of 3.9% from 2010. In January 2012, studies prepared by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)<sup>3</sup> show a growth of 3% to 4% in international tourist arrivals for 2012. From 2010 to 2030, arrivals to emerging economies are expected to increase at double the pace of those to advanced economies.<sup>4</sup>

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\* UNEP/CBD/COP/11/1.

<sup>1</sup> The Secretariat would like to extend thanks and appreciation to Ms. Monica Kobayashi of the University of Montreal for her dedication and commitment to producing successive drafts of this document.

<sup>2</sup> Travel & Tourism larger industry than automotive manufacturing, 2012 - <http://www.wttc.org/news-media/news-archive/2012/travel-tourism-larger-industry-automotive-manufacturing>

<sup>3</sup> UNWTO is the specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

<sup>4</sup> UNWTO – Tourism Highlights 2012 edition.

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3. In June 2012, Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development highlighted the concept of sustainable tourism, proposed that further consideration is given to sustainable tourism activities and recognized the need to support relevant capacity building to promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the biodiversity, cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities by supporting their local economies and the human and natural environment as a whole.

4. The Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development<sup>5</sup> were adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the CBD at its seventh meeting (decision VII/14). It was published in 2004 for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity and protected areas, including fragile riparian and mountain ecosystems. In order to increase clarity and facilitate the detailed understanding of the guidelines and the implementation by Parties, the Executive Secretary developed a user's manual, checklists on the basis of experience gained. Since their adoption, the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and the Users' Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development<sup>6</sup> have stimulated private and other sectors of tourism to protect, manage and sustainably use the unique, diverse and threatened natural resources found on islands, parks, mountains, mangroves and other sensitive areas.

5. Sustainable tourism has been defined as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'<sup>7</sup>. A further elaboration of sustainable tourism by UNWTO, refers, to the need for it to make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; to respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; and to ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations,

6. Jointly with the UN Foundation, UNEP and the Rainforest Alliance, UNWTO launched the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008. The GSTC are a set of 40 voluntary standards and represent a basic common understanding of sustainable tourism upon which different players can relate, or build, their own specific sets of standards. These criteria constitute a critical step towards ensuring sustainability as the standard practice for the entire tourism industry and represent an important part of the response of the tourism community to the global challenges of poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. UNWTO is also one of the founding partners and a permanent member of the Board of Directors of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) established in 2010, as a body aimed at the dissemination and application of the criteria. Protection of biodiversity and natural resources are highlighted as core elements of sustainable tourism by UNWTO, and in the GSTC. The CBD Guidelines set out a framework for achieving these elements of sustainable tourism development by making tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive, engaging the private sector and local and indigenous communities, and promoting infrastructure and land-use planning based on the principles of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

7. At its Tenth meeting in 2010, the Conference of the Parties adopted the decision X/20 Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives and requested the Executive Secretary to continue collaboration with the World Tourism Organization, including on a review of the application of the CBD Guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh

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<sup>5</sup> CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development - <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/doc/programmes/tourism/tourism-manual-en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *Making Tourism More Sustainable* UNWTO and UNEP, 2005

meeting. Tourism and Biodiversity will be discussed by the eleventh Conference of the Parties under agenda item 5.2 on *Cooperation with international organizations, other conventions, and initiatives*.

8. Tourism also contributes to meet at least 13 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and builds on early efforts towards more sustainable ecosystems and economies.

9. Parties listed in Annex II have reported on relevant progress made in policies, programmes and practices making use of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, and lessons learned in their promotion, shared their views and experiences as to how biodiversity and tourism stakeholders can further cooperate in achieving the Aichi targets and shared their experiences, potentials, limitations and lessons learned in promoting tourism concessions in protected areas.

10. This report, produced with the UN World Tourism Organization, aims to discuss the status and perspectives of the implementation of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. UNWTO, the Global Partnership on Tourism, UN Foundation, Rainforest Alliance, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UNESCO, 12 CBD Parties, IUCN-TAPAS, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and specialists in sustainable tourism (see Annex II) contributed to this review through voluntary contributions and interviews.

## **II. THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

11. The CBD guidelines have been incorporated in the work of the Global Partnership of Sustainable Tourism and its predecessor the International Taskforce on Sustainable Tourism. In particular, the Policy recommendations highlight several criteria including the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by UNWTO and endorsed by the UN General Assembly and the recommendations and guidelines provided by Multilateral Environmental Agreements and conventions as appropriate, including the CBD, the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Code of Conduct for the protection of children against sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.

12. Tourism can have both a positive impact on the conservation of natural resources, and support responsible ways of including culture and traditions of local populations in destination development. Therefore, tourism has also been consistently considered in COP decisions regarding business and biodiversity; protected areas and resource mobilization as an innovative market-based financing mechanism; poverty eradication and biodiversity as an effective and biodiversity-friendly livelihood alternative, particularly for indigenous and local communities in sensitive areas; and the impact of invasive alien species as a critical player in control and eradication.

13. Tourism is increasingly being recognised as a powerful sector capable of stimulating and driving economic and social development. The current trend to boost tourism in new destinations specially in developing countries might bring opportunities not only for economic development and poverty alleviation, but also for environmental and biodiversity sustainability. Because ecosystem services and biodiversity are vital for tourism, it is critical for destinations and the tourism sector to protect them as valuable assets that contribute to the long-term success of tourism. Thus, the UNWTO notes that the conservation of biodiversity is a critical concern that must be addressed in any viable tourism development strategy. To support discussions at CBD COP 11 on that topic, under agenda item 5.2, the SCBD is collaborating with UNWTO to produce an assessment of the links between biodiversity and tourism development.

14. To bring tourism back into the agendas of COP 11, the Secretariat of the CBD proposes to collaborate with the UNWTO, UNESCO, UNEP, IUCN and its Specialist Group on Tourism in Protected Areas (TAPAS), the Brazilian Instituto Semeia, interested Parties and the Indian Ecotourism Association to produce two publications for dissemination at COP 11 and side events to discuss financing of protected areas through tourism concessions and partnerships, sustainable large-scale resort development in

sensitive ecosystems (i.e. islands and other biodiverse landscapes), and ecotourism (i.e. small-scale community- and nature-based) as a livelihood alternative for indigenous, local and traditional communities.

### **III. METHODOLOGY FOR THE REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

15. In order to have a wider understanding of the impacts of the utilization of the CBD guidelines, five sources of information were utilized in order to organize this report. The sources are listed in Annex II.

(a) A survey has been designed to better understand the experience that Parties and organizations have had during these eight years since the CBD guidelines were published. A questionnaire was used in this survey to collect primary data. The electronic survey, which consists of four questions, was widely circulated to a team of thirty specialists that works with SCBD since 2004 (see the list of specialists at session references) and related networks via e-mail. The questionnaire is available at [www.cbd.int/output.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/output.shtml) and attached as Annex I. Twenty two responses were received and analyzed;

(b) Voluntary reports submitted by 12 Parties in response to CBD Notification 2012-105 (July 2012, see table attached as Annex II);

(c) Submissions by six UNWTO Parties in response to UNWTO's *Note verbale*;

(d) SCBD mission reports;

(e) Other guides published by CBD and partners;

The above information was complemented by a review of existing literatures on sustainable development of tourism and National Reports of CBD Parties. Publications from international development organizations such as Rainforest Alliance and IUCN, and other agencies such as UNWTO were reviewed and cited.

### **IV. THE APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS**

16. The following examples and case studies illustrate the implementation of the CBD Guidelines in accordance with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

*Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, all people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.*

17. Awareness levels are reported as low but increasing significantly. Organizations such as the MesoAmerican Reef Tourism Initiative (MARTI), the IUCN and the Rainforest Alliance have not only invested in tools to provide access to information (e.g. guidelines, training in good environmental practices and campaigns) but also influenced laws, code of conduct, regulations in protected areas and heritage sites, and norms that are in the place toward sustainable tourism. Many organizations have participated actively in developing environmental programs to inform clients and personnel about local culture, ecosystems, plants and species; the adverse impact of feeding wildlife animals; policies to avoid extraction of species of flora and fauna and sustainable use of water, not only in the area of the business but also in the communities where they live.

- UNEP has developed a series of guides aiming the tour operator businesses that work in sensitive environments, mountains, deserts, and marine recreation. UNEP also has promoted the CBD guidelines through several training materials developed on conservation since 2005 such as

Forging Links between Protected Areas and the Tourism Sector: How Tourism Can Benefit Conservation<sup>8</sup> and Heritage-Based Tourism - Conserving our Treasures for Tomorrow<sup>9</sup>.

- In response to the concerns of Caribbean IUCN Members and stakeholders about the impacts of hotel siting and design on coastal ecosystems critical to biodiversity in the Caribbean, IUCN collected evidence of the biodiversity risks and opportunities linked to the development of hotels and resorts in the Caribbean. Its purpose is to raise awareness of these impacts among key stakeholders and to demonstrate the need to address this issue for the long-term well-being of the Caribbean region. This research led to the development of the guides to support hotel and resort managers in the integration of sound biodiversity practices in their operations: “Biodiversity Principles for siting”; “Biodiversity My Hotel in Action<sup>10</sup>”, a guide to sustainable use of biological resources; “The Hotel Manager’s Checklist”, a checklist for hotel managers to use in assessing their hotel’s performance and planning future actions based on overall approaches to biodiversity conservation practices, hotel restaurants, guest rooms and public areas, hotel souvenir shops, hotel grounds and gardens; and as a complementation, “TRAFFIC recommends”, thirteen factsheets with recommendations on sustainable use of biological resources developed by TRAFFIC<sup>11</sup>.
- A study published by Rainforest Alliance shows that businesses made important changes in the availability of information to clients, employees, and business owners on policies and measures to efficiently use and conserve water.
- In Peru, the Tourism Law (No 29 408) aims to promote, encourage, and regulate the sustainable development of tourism. In the national tourism strategic plan (2008-2018), the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism is developing programs and activities such as rural community tourism, “*De mi tierra, un producto*”, “*Al turista, lo nuestro*”; actions for the promotion and dissemination of tourism culture, actions for sustainable tourism and development of tourist routes such as Pisco, Cocoa, Coffee, Textiles and Poultry which are aligned with the CBD guidelines.
- The Regional program of the Danube Competence Center (DCC) contributes to the development of the sustainable tourism sector in the Middle and Lower Danube region by implementing projects, building capacities and promoting high-quality standards of tourism services and products. The key of this project is to establish a regional institution aiming at fostering the development of tourism, targeting in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. They recognize the protection of the Danube area as one of the largest connected ecosystems in Europe as being an important key to economic development of the entire region.

*Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.*

18. Good progress has been made in using environmental impact assessments for development projects to reduce poverty and generate employment.

- MARTI Guide has been very favorably received, e.g. the Quintana Roo State Government adopted the document presenting it on its official Web portal as the Guide for the Investor. Local Architects that wish to renew their license are trained in the MARTI guidelines for sustainable

<sup>8</sup> Forging Links Between Protected Areas and the Tourism Sector: How Tourism Can Benefit Conservation - <http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=DTI/0591/PA>

<sup>9</sup> Heritage-Based Tourism - Conserving our Treasures for Tomorrow - <http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=DTI/1222/PA>

<sup>10</sup> IUCN Publications [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp\\_work/tourism/hotels\\_\\_\\_resorts/publications/](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/tourism/hotels___resorts/publications/)

<sup>11</sup> TRAFFIC – The wildlife trade monitoring network - <http://www.traffic.org>

Planning, Design and Construction in the Mexican Caribbean. The team works towards the MARTI guidelines being integrated as mandatory criteria in municipal Land Use and Zoning Plans, and last not least, the team is exploring incentives to engage more private sector developers to adopt and apply the guidelines in their developments projects.

- In Montenegro, German development cooperation supported the Montenegrin Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Protection to draw up hiking and mountain bike legislation. The local hiking clubs have identified marked and signposted hiking paths in all three regions in accordance with the defined standards and a wine road has been set up at Lake Scutari and in Cetinje. Local vintners have invested in developing their wine cellars and hold wine-tasting events. Sixteen vintners have already registered as entrepreneurs and new tourist products at Lake Scutari National Park have increased income and led to the creation of jobs.
- Tourism as cross-cutting sector has also gained growing economic importance especially in developing countries. Developing countries increasingly ask for knowledge transfer to continuously protecting their rich biological diversity while benefitting from touristic value added. The UNWTO Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity is currently working on a project to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas in the Caucasus; in another project the Consulting Unit provides for capacity building of interested partners by transferring German biosphere reserves' know-how to tourism representatives via training in close cooperation with relevant UN and international organisations.
- Poverty alleviation through tourism is a central area of policy and supported by the UNWTO. One of its main activities is the ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism – Elimination of Poverty) initiative, which was established to harness the developmental power of tourism in the fight against poverty. Projects include developing ecotourism products with local communities and involving local people in tourism development in and around protected areas with the view to enhance the local economic impact from tourism. The UNWTO ST-EP promotes poverty alleviation through the provision of assistance to sustainable development projects. The Initiative is based on seven mechanisms through which the poor can benefit from tourism. UNWTO views the ST-EP Initiative as an effective tool to make a tangible contribution to the Millennium Development Goals, particularly for goals 1, 3, 7 and 8, addressing extreme poverty and hunger, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnership respectively. The portfolio of ST-EP projects has rapidly expanded and now includes over 100 projects in a total of 36 developing countries, ranging from assisting communities to develop community-based tourism products to interventions aiming at increasing local employment in the tourism sector, establishing pro-poor business linkages with tourism enterprises and supporting sustainable tourism development in remoter destinations with a view to enhancing its local economic impact. Projects are executed in close collaboration with national tourism authorities, local governments, NGOs, development organizations and tourism enterprises in the beneficiary countries.

*Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits*

Despite their dependence on biodiversity, hotels and resorts can have significant negative impacts on ecosystems and natural resources. A hotel impacts biodiversity at each stage of its life cycle, from planning through to closure. Planning and development control are critically important for the sustainability of tourism and protection of biodiversity. The tourism sector works to reduce impacts on biodiversity and to support conservation. Implementation of sustainable tourism practices as well as the promotion of more sustainable management and use of natural resources helps to reduce pressures on biodiversity.

- Rainforest Alliance produced a report<sup>12</sup> to establish the relationship between seven threats to biodiversity and its 35 sustainable tourism verification standard. The threats were defined based on the CBD Guidelines and other international organization such as IUCN and WWF to mitigate threats to biodiversity by practices of hotels. Preserve biodiversity within sustainable tourism destinations to protect integrity of the ecosystems, promote rational resources use and protect biodiversity. Study shows that implementation of sustainable management at business level generates positive impacts that reduce threats to biodiversity. The verification process includes an initial evaluation of the business, followed by technical assistance to improve sustainable management and a re-evaluation within 18-24 months. The indicators are based on Rainforest 35 sustainable tourism criteria. Study analyses 212 businesses between 2007 and 2011 in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. After receiving technical assistance from the Rainforest Alliance, business performance improved. The initial performance average for all countries was 45%. After receiving technical assistance from the Rainforest Alliance, performance increased to 58%, which represents an improvement of 13% in absolute terms. An improvement of 30% can be stated when examining the relative change, meaning that businesses have enhanced performance in almost a third of the criteria. The best performance percentage is just over 75%. This was achieved in Mexico for business performances related to over-exploitation of natural resources. Criteria used to evaluate hotel operations: sustainable firewood, renewable energy sources, energy efficient equipment/vehicles, over-exploitation of water resources, over-exploitation of natural resources used to generate energy, conserve water and use of devices to reduce water consumption, sustainable use of water sources, reduce erosion and sedimentation through proper management of rainwater maximize, use of natural light, acquisition of environmentally friendly supplies (recyclable paper, organic food, certified wood), tools and management monitoring, the existence and implementation of sustainability policy that addresses environmental, economic and service quality aspects, doing evaluations and taking corrective and preventive actions in management to ensure continued improvement; monitoring and critical analysis of corrective and preventative actions in management to ensure continued.
- MARTI's Best Practices for sustainable hotel operation implemented since 2007 at MARTI hotels are aligned with GSTC and the CBD guidelines. Currently 64 hotels offering over 18,000 rooms the Mexican section of the Mesoamerican Reef are implementing these MARTI Best Practices programs. In addition, MARTI verified 15 hotels through its partner Rainforest Alliance according to RA verification, a standard also in full alignment with GSTC. The 15 hotels offering approximately 6,000 rooms passed RA verification with an average grade of 79% of GSTC compliance.
- The continuous growth in tourism numbers puts pressure on the limited natural and manmade resources on islands especially around the 300 kilometers of costal line in Mauritius. All hotel developments in Mauritius have to comply with the provisions of the Hotel Development Strategy prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure and all hotel developments should adhere to the provisions of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) for coastal development. The PPG takes into consideration the site-specific, ecological and development aspects as laid in the CBD guidelines.
- A case study of Fairmont Mayakoba<sup>13</sup> is an example of an international hotel adopting a range of measures to avoid and minimise the impact of a sizeable resort and golf course development on coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and water channels. This sizeable hotel with 401 rooms was developed in 2006 on a 19-hectare site in the Mexican Riviera Maya that is part of a larger estate containing two other hotels operated by other companies. An earlier master plan for the estate, which involved thorough and careful environmental assessment of the geology, hydrology and ecology of the area, provided a guiding framework for Fairmont to design and construct its

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<sup>12</sup> THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY - Mitigation through sustainable tourism, Rainforest Alliance, 2012

<sup>13</sup> Building and operating biodiversity-friendly hotels, IUCN, 2012

own hotel, avoiding identified sensitive sites and minimizing impacts where possible. The first concern in the siting and design of the hotel was the avoidance of impact on the extensive area of mangrove forest that covers parts of the site. New aquatic habitats were created around the mangroves to serve as shelter, rest and feeding areas for many species of birds, fish, crustaceans and molluscs. To minimise stress on water systems, only indigenous plants have been used around the site. For more information, please consult the complete case presented at IUCN report *Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts*<sup>14</sup>.

*Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.*

19. The results of the study TEEB, co-financed by Germany, are currently being implemented in the project Nature Capital Germany with tourism being an integral part. As national examples, Germany especially supports the creation of the National Natural Landscapes (NNL, umbrella German brand name) with around 130 protected areas which constitute one third of the total German land area. NNL provide excellent pre-conditions for nature experience, nature tourism and sustainably geared outdoor activities with high recreational and leisure facilities. Since 2008, 20 protected areas have committed themselves to work closely with tourism and other businesses in the “Partners of the National Natural Landscapes Program”, coordinated by EUROPARC Germany. So far, more than 550 companies cooperate as partners where each one must achieve the criteria in terms of environmental quality, identify with the objectives of protected areas, regional authenticity and information provided to customers.

*Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.*

20. Progress in involving the private sector in adopting biodiversity-friendly business practices was reported by some Parties. Some actions have been promoted such as waste management (waste reduction, recycling and reprocessing, proper disposing of non-traditional or construction material, proper handling of organic waste and reutilization as compost piles, fertilizer production, spread or food for domestic animals); avoiding the purchase of disposable and non-biodegradable substances; giving preference for local products, reducing air pollution, water and soil contamination, light and sound effects to protect wildlife; using renewable energy sources; proper maintenance of engines to reduce pollution and spills in open water operations; measuring greenhouse gases emission and taking steps to reduce it; eliminating the use of pollutants that cause eutrophication; use biodegradable hygienic and cleaning products; implement waste water treatment systems.

- The Bonn Consulting Unit completed in 2011 a pilot project on energy efficiency in **Thailand** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions via energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources with significant savings in consumption reduction and CO<sup>2</sup> emission reductions. With regard to touristic providers the German Hotel and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA) is driving a successful energy campaign. The objective is to support companies in reducing energy consumption. Until 2012, nearly 6000 German hotels and restaurants participated in this approach. Since 2011, also a three-tiered “environmental check” including waste generation, water consumption and the food sector is possible. The companies learn via this process that the identification and implementation of environmental measures in their operating process count for savings in energy consumption and other operating costs and can be operated and financially feasible. They also learn that climate-related, environmental and conservation-oriented action, communicated as an additional service to the tourists, even provides a competitive advantage.

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<sup>14</sup> Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts, IUCN, 2012 - [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp\\_work/tourism/hotels\\_\\_\\_resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/tourism/hotels___resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617)



- Maho Bay and Concordia Eco-resort in St-John (**US Virgin Islands**)<sup>15</sup> is a longstanding example of tourism accommodation development designed to have minimal impact on ground vegetation, through use of platforms and walkways, as well as low-impact materials and technologies. St John is only accessible by boat and about two-thirds of the island, 3,000 hectares, is designated as a National Park, which also includes a further 2,000 hectares of submerged lands including coral gardens. Right from the start, tent-cabins at Maho Bay Resorts were built on raised 5m square platforms using hand construction techniques that left the natural environment virtually undisturbed. Car parking has been separated from the tent cabins and studios, keeping the footprint of each accommodation unit to a minimum. Visual intrusion from power lines and water pipes has been avoided by attaching them to the underside of boardwalks or, where this is not possible, running them along the ground. The tent cabins at Maho Bay Resorts have been designed with screened windows and open air terraces to allow natural cooling from the island tradewinds and translucent fabric on wooden frames to take advantage of natural light. Extensive use has been made of recycled and environmentally sound materials for building. Units at Concordia were constructed with the high-tech fabrics, which provide great strength and come in colours that blend into the landscape, while super-reflective roof fabrics are used to regulate temperature. Energy consumption is limited through use of timers and sensors. The 25 units at Concordia eco-resort are self-sufficient in energy by making full use of renewable technologies, including solar-powered water heaters. The availability of water is limited by lack of aquifers and permanent surface water supply on St John. Rainwater harvesting on almost every building diverts more than 1,500 m<sup>3</sup> of rainwater a year into collecting cisterns, which supply water for laundry, housekeeping and bathhouses. Cisterns are strategically located in the hilly environment so that water can flow using gravity, without the need for energy-consuming pumps. Water consumption is minimised through spring-action faucets and showers. Clean and odour-free waterless urinals have been and an anaerobic system is used to treat greywater, which is subsequently recycled and carried through lateral pipes to irrigate orchards, gardens and surrounding vegetation.<sup>16</sup>

*Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment*

21. This target needs more attention. According to the Rainforest Alliance study mentioned above, a 14% increase was obtained by the hotels in terms of taking measures to avoid the introduction of pests and exotic species which can alter or destroy native ecosystems<sup>17</sup>.

*Target 10: By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.*

- Each MARTI program has been developed to specifically protect the MesoAmerican Reef, one of the most vulnerable ecosystem and natural sites in the region. With regard to future tourism hotel and resort projects, the MARTI Guide for sustainable Planning, Design and Construction in the Mexican Caribbean was developed and published in co-operation with the Quintana Roo Tourism Ministry. The MARTI Guide is a multimedia platform that provides an easy “A-B-C” for the investors to safeguard their investment by following the legal framework for tourism developments in the Mexican Caribbean and by implementing best practices in the design and

<sup>15</sup> Building and operating biodiversity-friendly hotels, IUCN, 2012

<sup>16</sup> Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts, IUCN, 2012 -

[http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp\\_work/tourism/hotels\\_\\_\\_resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/tourism/hotels___resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617)

<sup>17</sup> THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY - Mitigation through sustainable tourism, Rainforest Alliance, 2012

construction of their resort. MARTI is also promoting the establishment of Natural Private Protected Areas and assisting hotels to declare private reserves. Changing the tourism development model in a region that is globally known, the tourism project “Cancun” is a challenge. In Cozumel MARTI is working through its partner *Grupo Intersectorial (GI)* with the Cozumel Marine Park (CONANP) to ensure that Marine Recreation Providers offering tours into the Marine Park adopt best practices in the operation of their boats and diving and snorkeling tours. MARTI also supports a monitoring exercise to measure the impact by visitors taking diving and snorkeling tours. Last not least it works with the Marine Park to control the proliferation of the Lionfish, an invasive species threatening the Mesoamerican Reef. MARTI’s cooperation with the Cozumel Marine Park has been very rewarding, specifically in view of making Best Practices mandatory with a sector of tourism service providers that have little incentive and even less legal requirement to implement these best practices.

*Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascapes.*

- El Nido resorts in Palawan, **the Philippines**, is an example of a collaborative approach in the destination, bringing together government, private sector developers, NGOs and local communities, working together over time on the management of the area for conservation and tourism through the use of various engagement and support mechanisms. It is a complex of four resorts with 192 accommodation units that has been developed since 1990 to present. The two municipalities of El Nido and Taytay in the Philippines are home of a rich terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem with 379 species of reef-building corals, 13 species of sea grasses and 31 species of mangrove plants. El Nido municipality is also a nesting area for three species of endangered sea turtles and an important area for more than 100 species of birds on their major migration route between summer breeding grounds as far away as Siberia and winter feeding grounds in the tropics. The evolving story of stakeholder collaboration in El Nido and Tayay has involved many groups working together with the aim of strengthening conservation supported by sustainable tourism development. Since the 1980s, there has been a close working relationship among the public, private and voluntary sectors in this area, which have recognised their common interest in conserving and improving local livelihoods. El Nido Resorts was an important catalyst for this collaboration, recognising the importance of conserving the marine environment surrounding its resorts and of benefitting the local community economically and socially through sustainable tourism. One mechanism that the company has used for delivering support was the establishment of a separate El Nido Foundation, to carry out social and environmental activities with the aim of improving the quality of life of El Nido residents while at the same time conserving the natural environment of the area. In 1991, the Government of the Philippines proclaimed one part of the coast as a marine reserve. This move was seen as an opportunity by the stakeholders, who realised that by working together they could use the reserve more effectively for local benefit. Over the next few years, the stakeholders worked together to seek an extension to the designated protected area. In 1998, this led to the declaration of the El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area (MRPA) by the Philippines Government. This declaration represented a significant expansion of the original reserve to include areas around Taytay, covering a total of more than 36,000 hectares of land and 54,000 hectares of marine waters. Profits from the company help provide a sustainable source of finance for NGOs with expertise to oversee a long-term programme of biodiversity conservation. In part due to the long-term commitments made by El Nido Resorts and its partners, there is evidence of extensive and varied marine life in the MRPA. Research scientists hosted by El Nido Resorts over the past four years have found 855 species of coral reef fish in El Nido and 403 species in Taytay Bay, and have identified several

new species. For more information, please consult the complete case presented at IUCN report *Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts*<sup>18</sup>.

- Another successful cross-border example is the "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST)" - a contract awarded by the EUROPARC Federation for European national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks. ECST is a practical management tool that was developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders for future tourism development of protected areas. Around 89 reserve areas (as of October 2011) are awarded in Europe with the "European Charter"<sup>19</sup>. A Network among the European regions helps to exchange experiences regarding the Charter implementation. So far, 387 local tourism businesses in 23 Charter Areas within this Network committed themselves to work towards an environmental management within their businesses and developing activities promoting and respecting the protected areas. The brochure "Joining forces – How the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas"<sup>20</sup> presents further related successful examples from various European countries. The recent EU-funded project "PARKS and BENEFITS" aims at ensuring sustainable regional development in eight large protected areas in six countries around the Baltic Sea including Germany. The project's main instrument was the applicability of ECST in the Baltic Sea Region and its joint implementation in national, regional and nature parks and a biosphere reserve. Two German protected areas: the Müritz National Park and the Biosphere Reserve South-East Rügen have been awarded the European Charta in 2011.

*Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained. Over-exploitation of natural resources, sale, traffic or display of products or species in danger of extinction, the use of wildlife meat without permits, sale of arts and crafts created from materials that come from threatened or endangered species.*

- After receiving technical assistance from the Rainforest Alliance, exploitation of wildlife species was reduced by 12%. Businesses dealt very well with practices such as avoiding animal captivity and reducing light and sound to avoid affecting wildlife. Businesses need to improve some actions regarding the introduction of pests and exotic species. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, businesses showed important improvements in reducing the consumption, sales, trafficking or displaying of endangered animal species or products coming from non-sustainable practices, improving their performance by 41% and 32% respectively. Businesses in Costa Rica stood out in avoiding animal captivity, with a score of 100%. Guatemala showed the most improvement with respect to avoiding animal captivity, going from 0% to 75%<sup>21</sup>.

*Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.*

- North Island<sup>22</sup>, a small island part of the **Seychelles** archipelago, is an example of an initiative developed in 2002 that not only minimizes the environmental footprint of a hotel, but also

<sup>18</sup> *Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts*, IUCN, 2012 -

[http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp\\_work/tourism/hotels\\_\\_\\_resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/tourism/hotels___resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617)

<sup>19</sup> EUROPARC Federation - Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas - <http://www.european-charter.org/home>

<sup>20</sup> EUROPARC Federation, 2008

<sup>21</sup> *THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY - Mitigation through sustainable tourism*, Rainforest Alliance, 2012

<sup>22</sup> *Building and operating biodiversity-friendly hotels*, IUCN, 2012

restores the island's habitat and endemic species, led by an investor and backed up by relevant government standards. For nearly 200 years, North Island was farmed for coconuts, which required the clearance of native vegetation. Following the collapse of the copra industry in the 1970s, the island was abandoned. The black rat increased uncontrollably in numbers resulting in the disappearance over time of most of the remaining native animals and plant species. In 1997, the whole island was purchased by Wilderness Safaris, an international company with a sustainability strategy encapsulated in its concept of the '4Cs' – conservation, community, culture and commerce. Wilderness Safaris focuses on two elements of conservation: environmental management systems (building and operating in the most eco-friendly way possible to ensure the lowest possible carbon footprint); and biodiversity conservation (understanding, managing and protecting the wildlife and ecosystems with which they are involved). Wilderness Safaris' vision for North Island was to create a sanctuary for the reintroduction of some of the Seychelles' most endangered animals and plants and it would be facilitated by the development of an exclusive hotel on the island dedicated to sustainable luxury and exceptional guest experiences. Access to the island by boat has been carefully planned to minimise environmental risk. Early on, it was decided that a jetty should not be built, not only to avoid influencing the natural seasonal movement of sand around the island but also to minimise the risk of inadvertent re-introduction of rodents from incoming boats tying up at a jetty. In addition to the above avoidance and minimization measures, Wilderness Safaris has implemented an extensive programme of positive conservation and restoration of the island's biodiversity. This programme has proceeded systematically, carefully and rigorously, with funding provided by both the income from the lodges and the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust, an NGO founded by Wilderness Safaris to support its community and conservation projects. About 21% of the island's surface has already received some level of vegetation rehabilitation. With the support of Island Conservation Society (ICS), a local NGO, and as part of a national project funded by *Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)*, North Island successfully completed a programme of black rat eradication in 2005, making it the largest tropical island in the world to successfully do so. The state and condition of much of the native vegetation has been restored to a point where it could support the introduction or re-introduction of endemic species, especially birds, from elsewhere in the Seychelles.<sup>23</sup>

- On the basis of voluntary project-related funding by the German government, in 2006, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) set up the "Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity" in Bonn. From 2006 to 2009, the Bonn Consulting Unit implemented pilot projects in the tsunami-affected areas in Indonesia and Thailand to contribute to the ecological restructuring of tourism. The projects were about implementation of strategies and policies for sustainable tourism development where a total of 18 bookable tourism products were developed including the construction of natural trails in mangrove areas and the rehabilitation of a coral reef.
- The Experience Green Belt<sup>24</sup> deserves specific attention when considering new destinations: For nearly 40 years, the so-called Iron Curtain divided Europe. From the Barents to the Black Sea, there ran a barrier which displayed its inhumane side most strongly in Germany. It cut up a country into East and West, separated families and friends for decades. And yet nature conquered the frontier strip. The "Green Belt" was created, with valuable habitats full of rare animals and plants. The project opened up new tourist destinations and supported the establishment of a permanent tourist infrastructure based on nature conservation. These offers which are market-oriented and target-group-specific allow visitors to experience the uniqueness and great diversity of this unparalleled network of habitats across Germany.

<sup>23</sup> Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts, IUCN, 2012 - [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp\\_work/tourism/hotels\\_\\_\\_resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/tourism/hotels___resorts/publications/?uPubsID=4617)

<sup>24</sup> The Green Belt - <http://www.erlebnisgruenesband.de/en/startseite.html>

- London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were committed to respect the planet's ecological limits, its cultural diversity and to create a legacy for sport, the environment and the local and global community. Committed to conserving existing biodiversity with opportunities taken to increase ecological value and access to nature, the Games were directed “Towards a One Planet Olympics: Achieving the first sustainable Olympic Games and Paralympic Games<sup>25</sup>”. In preparation for the Games themselves, actions were taken, such as remediation of land and creation of a large new urban park (the London Olympic Park); waterway rejuvenation to provide amenity and wildlife habitats; implementation of the Olympic Biodiversity Action Plan ; infrastructure-, landscaping-, planting- and building design to minimize ecological impact and to increase biodiversity. Natural England has worked with the delivery bodies and local authorities to extend this legacy for the natural environment to venues outside of London - Hadleigh, Eton Dorney, Box Hill and Weymouth and Portland. These actions resulted in a legacy for the environment, which can contribute to achieving the Aichi Targets, including net gain of ecologically valuable green space, biodiversity as an integral component of the urban environment through the design and management of the Olympic Park and marine biodiversity as an integral component of planning for the sailing events. Moreover, people have greater local access to nature at venues. An example for green infrastructure is the Lea Valley ‘green corridor’ which is connected to the River Thames.

*Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels*

- Globally, indigenous communities are the stewards of significant amounts of land with rich biodiversity, and many of them promote sustainable tourism as an additional livelihood option and as a means to share their culture and educate visitors on traditional knowledge. By identifying best practices in this segment, the CBD and Planeta.com, with the support of the Heidehof Foundation, enhanced the biodiversity component of indigenous tourism products, aggregating value to their operations, and contributing to awareness raising on biodiversity with visitors and hosts alike. The first version of this award was given out for 2008, to two leading indigenous operators. This initiative complements other activities of the CBD in building capacity of indigenous and local communities, such as the workshop series on indigenous tourism, biodiversity and web-based technologies. As part of the CBD programmes of work on Tourism and Biodiversity, and Article 8(j): Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices and a complementary project to the CBD workshop series, the Secretariat of the CBD hosted the second Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website (ITBW) Award for 2010, the International Year for Biological Diversity. The award aimed at private tourism services, owned and operated by indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles, and its main objectives are to motivate candidates to improve their online communication on biological and cultural diversity, to highlight their best practices in managing tourism in a biodiversity-friendly way, to raise operators and public’s awareness on biodiversity.

*Target 20: By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 from all sources and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization should increase substantially from the current levels.*

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<sup>25</sup> London 2012 Candidate City Towards a One Planet Olympics Achieving the first sustainable Olympic and Paralympics Games - [http://www.london2012.com/mm/Document/Publications/Sustainability/01/25/66/62/One-planet-olympics-2005\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.london2012.com/mm/Document/Publications/Sustainability/01/25/66/62/One-planet-olympics-2005_Neutral.pdf)

22. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties. Overall, reporting indicates that funding for implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 has increased but is still insufficient.

- The regional socio-economic effects of tourism in German national parks were evaluated in the framework of a Research & Development project in 2009. Around 51 billion people visit the 14 German National parks per year creating a gross turnover of 2.1 billion € and the safeguarding of nearly 70.000 work places<sup>26</sup>. Münstertal-Staufen is an example of a successful tourism destination that illustrates how tourism can financially contribute to nature and biodiversity with tourists financing landscape conservation<sup>27</sup>.
- Concession operations that enable visitor access and enjoyment while minimizing environmental impacts and preserving resources for future generations. In the USA, the NPS administers more than 500 concession contracts that, in total, gross over \$1 billion annually. NPS concessionaires employ more than 25,000 people in a variety of fields during peak seasons, providing services ranging from food service and lodging to whitewater rafting adventures and motor coach tours. The types of concessions desired for a protected area depend on the objectives, location, and management plan of the park. Concessionaires are chosen through a selection process. NPS Concessionaires are required to appropriately train their employees and, through their facilities and services, to instill in their guests an appreciation of the park, its purpose and significance, its proper and sustainable management, and the stewardship of its resources. Concession contracts require the concessionaire to provide all visitor services in a manner that is consistent with and supportive of the interpretive themes, goals, and objectives articulated in each park's planning documents. Concessionaires are required to comply with applicable provisions of all laws, regulations, and policies that apply to natural and cultural resource protection. Concession operations are evaluated at least annually to ensure that park visitors are provided with high-quality services and facilities that are safe and sanitary and that meet NPS environmental, health, safety, operational and maintenance standards. All franchise fees and other monetary considerations generated by the NPS are deposited into a Department of the Treasury special account. In accordance with the NPS Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998<sup>28</sup> 20% will be available to support activities throughout the national park system, and 80 % will be available to the park unit in which it was generated for visitor services and funding high-priority and urgently necessary resource management programs and operations.
- In the UK, Cumbria and the Lake District, visitor giving is supporting many projects, such as Red Squirrels Conservation where visitors are helping to protect them and also to raise awareness and monitoring of red squirrel populations. Visitors donate over £10,000 each year.

## **V. CHALLENGES, RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

23. Since 2004, important initiatives have been launched and several other guides, best practices and strategic plans were designed based on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. Parties also reported that CBD Guidelines are a valuable tool box that not only address various issues related to biodiversity management and conservation, but also improved cooperation between

<sup>26</sup> Julius-Maximilian-University Würzburg on behalf of German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN, 2009

<sup>27</sup> EUROPARC Deutschland - <http://www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/partner>

<sup>28</sup> NATIONAL PARKS OMNIBUS MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1998 - <http://www.concessions.nps.gov/docs/OMNIBUS1998.pdf>

environment protection entities and the tourism sector leading to substantive benefits for all, regarding higher protection status, decent job creation and enhanced competitiveness. The CBD Guidelines also supported directly and indirectly the adoption of policies, programmes and action on sustainable tourism promotion. However, at global level, there seem to be a substantial lack of knowledge regarding the existence of the CBD Guidelines and its practical implementation. As a global status of guidelines implementation, 70% of the countries in this study reported that they applied the CBD Guidelines directly or indirectly, and 30% are not aware, but they use similar strategies and principles for sustainable development of tourism that includes reference also to Biodiversity. A considerable number of Parties reported that there is cooperation between different Ministries such as Ministry of Development, Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment when it comes to tourism and sustainable development.

24.

In general, Parties and the specialists reported that they have turned problems into opportunities to improve their actions toward achieving the objectives of the Convention in tourism. The following section presents some challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the CBD guidelines.

- In addition to those projects that have sustainable tourism development as main objective, across the world there are approximately 80 ongoing projects commissioned by the federal **German Government** (BMZ) which include tourism relevant components and activities.
- The Rainforest Alliance standards<sup>29</sup> for verification of sustainable tourism operations, based on the CBD Guidelines and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, have been implemented with success. The Rainforest Alliance recently produced the case study **THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY: MITIGATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM** based on their work in threaten ecosystems with large tourism developments and in destinations with community-based tourism operations. One major challenge was to group the sustainable evaluation criteria due to the fact that most of the tourism criteria deal with various threats to biodiversity in crosscutting ways. However, this challenge led the incorporation of modifications into the new 2011 Verification Standard, resulting in a more direct relationship between sustainable criteria/indicators and biodiversity protection.
- Currently, the majority of protected areas cannot be reliably financed through tourism. Ideally the tourism service of the park pays for the costs of receiving tourists, but it is risky to raise false expectations assuming that tourism can solve all problems. However, successful cases show that the current volume of income can be expanded in a sustainable way by applying the CBD Guidelines principles without compromising the protected area conservation.
- The issue of permits, licenses and concessions in parks is a major policy concern that has not received enough attention. The various management models for concessions in tourism in parks such as the use of non-profit corporations compared to profit-making corporations or park agency functioning as a parastatal corporation as occurs widely in Africa need to be addressed. The issue of permits, license and concessions is a major and complex administrative activity. Generally it is currently undertaken in parks without the full understanding of the options available, as well as the pros and cons of each of the options.
- Countries like **Chile** are debating on the use of non-profit corporations compared to profit-making corporations to operate its protected areas. In 2011, Chile received 3,069,792 foreign tourists, an increase of 11% compared to the previous year, and Chile's National Protected Areas received about 500.000 visits. The results contribute to strength the CBD guidelines and Chile's tourism development in terms of participation of public institutions and programmes for sustainable development. The Environmental Law<sup>30</sup> includes the National Tourism Service as part of the technical evaluation committee for environmental impact assessment. The Tourism Act N°20.423/2010 addresses the National Tourism Policy and Strategic Plan, and it aims to consolidate

<sup>29</sup> Rainforest Alliance Verification Services for Tourism Businesses - <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism/verification>

<sup>30</sup> Chile's Environment Law 19.300 and 20.417

tourism industry as one of the pillars of development of Chile. The national policy implements programs to encourage the private sector to promote the development of its territories, contributing to sustainable development of touristic destinations and promoting the competitiveness of the sector by incorporating standards and certification to ensure the quality and safety of tourist services. The implementation of guidelines for sustainable practices and criteria to classify the sustainable destinations has been developed. The Act should promote as well the development of concessions for tourism in National Protected Areas when they are compatible with the object of conservation of environmental heritage set by regulations for granting concessions for tourism in protected areas.

- Capacity building for effective management, marketing, and visitor services can lead to increased wildlife and less land degradation in community protected conservancies. Despite the fact that there is a considerable number of staff assigned to manage the concessions that has no professional training in the field, the private sector has offered more and more highly-trained professionals to decide on the options available for service and product production.
- In some projects involving indigenous people, it was important to incorporate gender equity issues within the context of tourism initiatives to build capacity in protected areas management while at the same time building capacity in tourism business management.
- An approach that incorporates land use planning with considerations for natural resources such as wetlands, related to the type and location of tourism and supporting infrastructure, can maximize community benefit and minimize environmental degradation. At Ramsar's COP11 in Bucharest, Ramsar's Secretary General, Mr. Anada Tiéga, the Secretary General of UNWTO, Mr. Taleb Rifai, and the Romanian Secretary of State for Regional Development and Tourism launched the publication "Destination Wetlands: Supporting Sustainable Tourism"<sup>31</sup>. This publication contains references to existing guidelines on sustainable tourism as well as many other useful materials on developing and managing sustainable tourism. It is relevant to wetland site managers, tourism and wetland policy-makers and planners, and the private sector (including those investing in, operating or developing tourism in wetlands).
- Many sustainable tourism projects displayed an overreliance on niche market tourism segments based on Community-Based-Tourism (CBT), homestays or similar apply sustainable tourism tools. In the past 20 years many sustainable tourism projects have focused too narrowly on development and capacity building initiatives located in the immediate protected area and buffer zone surroundings. Many such initiatives were conceived of as CBT projects offering products like handicraft markets, cultural villages and/or homestays. Especially protected area management projects borrowed heavily from the CBT-approach. At first sight the CBT-concept may offer some of the highest opportunities for direct pro-poor impacts from tourism. In practice too often CBT-projects were developed under conditions of overambitious and unfounded expectations toward (international) market demand. On the supply side many projects were ill conceived in terms of the resources, experience and market access needed for creating an attractive quality tourism product that is able to compete with professional and well-established tourism offers and market players. The integration of poor population groups into the supply chain of professional companies in existing touristic destinations promises to bring better results.
- The goal of **Ghana's** Tourism Sector Medium Term Development Plan (2010-2013) is to develop Ghana as an internationally competitive and high quality destination where the tourism industry explicitly contributes to poverty reduction and conservation of the country's cultural, historical and environmental heritage. The Ministry attaches immense importance to biodiversity conservation and conservation of the forest and coastal ecosystem given that they themselves are major ecological attractions visited by both domestic and international eco-tourists. The Ministry of Tourism collaborates with relevant Ministries and Agencies such as the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission to promote eco-tourism in the National Parks and Nature reserves as part of its policy to use tourism

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-tourism-publication/main/ramsar/1-63-523-538\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-tourism-publication/main/ramsar/1-63-523-538_4000_0)



as a tool to support the conservation of the environment. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism works closely with other stakeholders such as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, the Traditional Authorities as well as NGO's such as the Nature Conservation Research Centre and Ghana Rural Eco-tourism and Travel Office (GREET) at the local level to develop and promote the Beaches, the Lakes, the Waterfalls, Scenic Mountains and Landscapes. Besides generating substantial tourist income for conservation, the promotion of eco-tourism brings to bear on the travelling public awareness on responsible travel and the need to support conservation initiatives. It is gratifying to note that Ghana is a partner country and a beneficiary to the UNWTO/ UNIDO Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism (COAST) Project which seeks to support the conservation of globally significant coastal and marine eco-systems and associated bio-diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa through the reduction of the negative environmental impacts from coastal tourism.

- **Poland** has a National Strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity with the Action Plan for the period 2007-2013 is implemented by the Steering Committee which includes representative of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism. The publications of the Council of Europe on the tourist industry inform on the breakthrough in the attitudes and mentality of today's tourists, manifested mainly in their increased ecological awareness and high expectations of quality services, as well as environmentally attractive and unpolluted surroundings for their travels or leisure<sup>32</sup>. This represents opportunities for tourism development in areas of high nature value in Poland. Tourism in areas of high nature value such as small-scale agriculture, processing activity, artistic and practical handicraft as well as additional forms of sustainable tourism may be an important factor stimulating the development of regions whose greatest capital lies in nature, culture and tradition<sup>33</sup>. Protected areas cover around 10% of Poland's territory and feature exceptional nature values as well as outstanding cultural, landscape and tourist resources. The diversified forms of currently available tourist traffic in protected areas significantly affect the natural environment. However, for many local communities tourism also means an opportunity for economic development. To proper development of tourism in protected areas three objectives need to be achieved: ecological, social and economic. How the protected areas are made available to tourists depends on the type of a given area and it is important to assist various types of tourist exploration and plan the necessary infrastructure tailored to the individual conditions of a given protected area.
- For the **South African** government, activities related to Tourism Development are covered in the numerous provisions of the legislation. The Biodiversity Act also makes provision for the declaration and publication of Bioregional plans. A guideline to this effect was published in 2009. A National Protected Area Expansion Strategy has been published in 2008. Other mechanisms developed include the People and Parks and Kids and Parks Program, Stewardship Programme, and Boundless Southern Africa Brand. These mechanisms have direct implications for Tourism and respond adequately to the provisions made in the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism. The Department of Tourism facilitated the development of a National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism which was published by the South African Bureau of Standards in March 2011 and caters for, among others, local biodiversity conservation including supporting natural protected areas of high biodiversity value, the avoidance of adverse effects on ecosystems, reduction of the tourism impact on nature and natural resources, the encouragement of the benefits of tourism accruing to local communities.
- **Israel** applies principles for sustainable development of tourism that includes reference to Biodiversity such as territorial contiguity; integration in the landscape and environment; Planning and Building Law (environmental impact assessment in sensitive areas); plans for national parks, reservation areas and protected areas; strategic plan for sustainable tourism.

<sup>32</sup> Ceballos-Lascurian in: *The Ecotourism Statistical Fact Sheet*, The International Ecotourism Society, 2000

<sup>33</sup> D.Zaręba: *Ekoturystyka. Wyzwania i nadzieje (Ecotourism: challenges and hopes)*, PWN, Warsaw, 2000.

- The **Peruvian** Tourism Law<sup>34</sup> aims to promote, encourage, and regulate the sustainable development of tourism. In the national tourism strategic plan (2008-2018), the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism is developing programs such as Rural community tourism program, and actions for the promotion and dissemination of sustainable tourism culture which are aligned with the guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development. Considering that many of the major tourist destinations in Peru fall into the Protected Natural Areas, the Ministry of Tourism (MINCETUR) and the National Service of Protected Natural Areas are implementing joint actions to offer tools such as field equipment for monitoring and control to assist in the safety and security of tourists in its protected areas. In the process of updating the National Tourism Strategic Plan, MINCETUR is aware of the importance of increase coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism and the Ministry of Environment to incorporate more specific initiatives and coordinated with the Guidelines on Biological Diversity.
- Since the tourism industry is one of the main pillars of the **Mauritian** economy which generates MUR 40 billion annually, the Ministry of Tourism is laying much emphasis on guided principles of sustainable tourism development and tourism related activities. Tourist arrivals in Mauritius are considerably increasing from 656,453 in 2000 to forecasted 1,010,000 in 2012. The tourism industry has created above 100,000 employments with 27,000 direct jobs and around 73,000 indirect ones. The continuous tourists' growth is putting stress on the limited natural and manmade resources on the island especially around the 300 kilometers of costal line. The Ministry of Tourism and Leisure of Mauritius stands guided by both the Tourism Development Plan (2002) and the Mauritius Sector Strategy Plan on Tourism (2009) which recommend coastal and environmental conservation and management. The Tourism Authority Act 2006 makes provision for the regulation of the tourism industry with a view to promoting its development in a sustainable manner. The Ministry of Tourism and Leisure intends to introduce the Blue Flag Programme in Mauritius to safeguard our coastal zone for long-term environmental and economic benefits and the preparation of Guidelines is highly participatory since it is important to take into consideration the needs of the local community. Since 2007-2008, the Ministry has embarked on the implementation of marine zoning and as to date, eight projects in 48 sites have been implemented. In line with a sustainable tourism industry, a series of Guidelines for nautical activities have been prepared by the Ministry namely for Dolphin and Whale Watching, Parasailing, Helmet Diving/Unversea Walk and SCUBA diving.
- **Egypt** benefited from the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development to prepare its Ecotourism Strategy for protected areas which are visited annually by about 4 million tourists. Many of the recent consultant studies identified sustainable tourism as the most appropriate direction for tourism development, which was understandable given the wealth of natural and cultural resources, importance of environmental protection to the livelihood of the population and the opportunity to distribute revenues to local communities. A sustainable tourism approach can not only meet these objectives but also expand the tourism mandate to ensure that all tourism development contributes to the interest of stakeholders.
- In 2008, the **Republic of Korea** adopted ecotourism as a part of the national policy for Green Growth and has developed policy and financial mechanism for sustainable tourism. Approximately 40 million people visit Koreans' park per year. Korea National Park Service (KNPS) has three objectives for ecotourism: environmental education to enhance visitors' awareness on the values of park resources, satisfying visitors by offering a range of experiences in the parks, and to activate local communities' economy. Republic of Korea has a financing mechanism between National park and private enterprise and some large companies have supported voucher program for students' travel to national park. This Voucher is a free coupon for handicapped, multi-cultural, low income, and Island and isolated area family. The Ministry of Environment has supported KNPS and local government for sustainable design of resort development since 2010 and has ecotourism as an

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<sup>34</sup> Peru's Tourism Law No 29 408

option to activate local economy. One example is Gwanmae-do Island which has 126 households in 5.73 km<sup>2</sup>. By marketing the park villages through its eco-trails and local products, the number of visitors increased considerably from 634 in 2010 to 51,956 in 2011. In addition, numerous mobile applications for travel such as “25 eco tour lists” and Dulre-gil storytelling (an audio-visual service with GPS traffic information) have been developed.

## **VI. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES ON BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

25. The tourism industry has been contributing in many ways to biodiversity. However, some potential actions are still required. The lack of knowledge regarding the existence of the CBD Guidelines could be easily cleared by bringing the issue to the attention of the CBD Parties and relevant stakeholders, especially the private sector, and strive for the CBD Guidelines’ enhanced application including by an updated practical manual. Experience from working on tourism and biodiversity clearly shows that there is an urgent need to raise the issue of tourism within the main debates of the CBD.

26. Based on this review of progress achieved and obstacles faced, future action to strengthen implementation of the guidelines and to achieve the targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 could focus on the following key opportunities, reformulated into the following recommendations:

- i. A strategic plan in those sensitive areas comprises promotion of especially larger-scale sustainable destination management, including siting, design and construction of tourism hotels and resorts. Techniques and tools are available, thus the next step is to implement them.
- ii. There is a huge potential for the use of tourism concession in protected areas as a complementary source of funding for CBD target 11 (establish networks of protected areas and other forms of protection on up to 17% of land and freshwater surface and 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020).
- iii. Build capacity of park agencies to adequately partner with the private sector through tourism concessions across their networks of protected areas is arguably the one in which investments can be most effectively leveraged. Six countries (South Africa, Kenya, Canada, Australia, US and New Zealand) get more than 60% of their parks financed from tourism and visitation. Payment ecosystems services in protected areas that benefit from tourism activities are essential for all sensitive ecosystems. Methodology of economic evaluation such as TEEB can support the actions toward the options for sustainable development, by identifying the tangible areas which tourism can contribute to the management and conservation of protected areas.
- iv. Cooperate with Indigenous and Local Communities to build capacity to low impact ecotourism operating through micro and small businesses. Promoting ecotourism as a livelihood option in sensitive areas, particularly for indigenous and local communities - capacity building options are available and need to be disseminated and applied.
- v. Active collaboration with other international organizations, with a view of creating appropriate synergies and widening the scope of beneficiaries from its activities, has been of great importance for UNWTO towards implementing the objectives of Agenda 21 and towards mainstreaming tourism in the global development agenda. In order to allocate resources for actions supporting the poor to benefit from tourism development, tourism needs to be properly recognized as a sector contributing to poverty reduction.
- vi. Governments can make a major contribution to achievement of international biodiversity goals by ensuring that legislation is placed and enforced, that enables and supports the sustainability of tourism, including protection of biodiversity. In particular, land use planning and development

- controls at national and destination levels can be used to influence the type of tourism activities and to control potentially harmful development.
- Governments, international agencies and other relevant organizations are invited to disseminate and implement existing guidelines more widely, including inter alia the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development to assist implementation of the biodiversity and ecosystem service components of sustainable tourism.
- vii. Tourism planning at the national and sub-regional levels should coordinate and interact with the local level. Planning should be closely connected as integral part of policies for sustainable development, i.e. national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, and local Agenda 21. Public and private institutions and organisations engaged in tourism planning, including tourism master plans, should make use of credible scientific methods and tools encompassing economic, environmental and social approaches and assessments for sustainable development that will help stakeholders related to different components of the value chain understand their environmental and socio-cultural impacts. They then should work to maximize benefits and reduce negative impacts. The recent economic crisis situation could potentially be utilized as an opportunity to introduce green investment in the economies. The majority of countries do not have resources to provide capacity building to the private sector on sustainability, so the need of a higher engagement of UN agencies and programmes in this area.
- viii. To serve as a funding mechanism for conservation, tourism development planning should include the private sector from the outset. Any sustainable tourism approach should inevitably work closely with private sector partners from the beginning when aiming at linking conservation goals in and around protected areas to an existing or emerging tourism economy and its value chain. Any such approach may include, inter alia, co-ownership and co-management business models between communities and professional tourism enterprises.
- ix. One factor often overlooked is sustainable housing and public services for the employees such as a large resort attracts. A little use has been made with regard to the opportunities offered by a broad based value chain approach targeting not only direct income streams of the tourism sector but also its positive indirect advantages (such as food & beverage supplies; construction, renovation and interior design; personal care products etc).
- x. As short-term perspectives, the Department of Environmental Science and Geography of University of Alberta is preparing a special of revitalized Parks journal for WCPA that focuses on tourism and the CBD targets. About 10 papers using case studies and general reviews will be published at the WCPA website. In the same line, the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies of University of Waterloo is producing a full guideline that outlines all the issues surrounding the provision of tourism services by a third party.

## CONCLUSIONS

27. Tourism heavily depends on an intact natural environment. It can have both a positive impact on the conservation of natural resources, and support responsible ways of including culture and traditions of local populations in destination development.

28. The study shows that there are indirect links between sustainable performance and biodiversity protection. Furthermore, for example, the implementation of the standards leads to changes in the business and destinations in terms of improvement on sustainable practices related to tourism and biodiversity. Sustainable development of tourism is an opportunity, especially for protected areas, to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of local communities through the creation of jobs and income, providing incentives for their conservation by raising awareness about their environment.

29. In this sense, in deliberations under agenda items 5.2 (Cooperation with international organizations, other conventions, and initiatives), and 5.3 (Business and Biodiversity), Parties may wish

to consider ways and means for enhanced cooperation and coordinating activities between Environment and Tourism Ministries and agencies and the private sector and NGOs in further applying the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, for instance to identify relevant potential hotspots and concentrate efforts in those priorities areas to preserve and plan for sustainable tourism development right from the beginning, as well as to expand the use of cost-effective mechanisms to strengthen local capacity and to share and adapt lessons and successful tools, including peer networks, learning exchanges, implementation partnerships, information tools for local decision-making, and formal education and training, with special attention on the next generation of tourism and parks professionals. These actions could include developing and supporting innovative and sustainable funding mechanisms for protected areas from sustainable tourism in sensitive areas, e.g. through trust funds, debt swaps with tourism and natural resource fees and licenses, payments for ecological services, private protected areas and other ways to increase long-term national or local financing for effective implementation of Aichi target 11.

30. The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and its tourism-related events represent an opportunity to highlight progress reached, identify challenges and chances ahead and consider ways and means how to actively reply also to recent international developments including new commitments to conservation and sustainability called for by Rio+20. The COP could support further awareness raising of biodiversity and sustainable tourist development, promote dialogue as well as enhanced cooperation and partnerships at all levels including the private sector, together with an effective destination management making full use of management tools and instruments such as the CBD Guidelines as a contribution to the implementation of the Convention. On the basis of the best practices described above, and through the mandate of decision X/20, Parties may wish to consider ways and means to further enhance the use and application of the CBD Guidelines at its next session.

## ANNEX I

### Questionnaire/Survey

In 2004, The Conference of the Parties adopted the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development recognizing that sustainable tourism can provide significant benefits to biodiversity conservation. After 8 years, the application of the Guidelines and the experience of Parties on the links between tourism and biodiversity will be included in the agenda of discussion at the eleventh meeting of the Conferences of the Parties.

As a well-known expert on these issues and according to your experience, we would like to ask for your contributions on the following topics:

1. The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development have been incorporated into criteria promoted by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, a platform of UN agencies, leading travel companies, hotels, country tourism boards and tour operators. Are those guidelines and criteria useful to you? Have you applied them, or similar ones, in your work, and with which results?
2. Tourism can finance networks of protected areas, for instance through tourism concessions and partnerships – in some cases, up to 85% of park agencies' expenditures are covered through tourism. Do you have any experience in this area? Have you engaged, or been involved, in partnerships between park agencies and the tourism industry? What were the results and lessons learned?
3. Large parts of biodiverse ecosystems are under the stewardship of indigenous and local communities, and ecotourism can be a critical livelihood that also protects biodiversity. Do you promote or support community-based ecotourism as a strategy for greener livelihood? What are the results and lessons learned?
4. Landscapes with rich biodiversity (beaches, islands, mountains) can be the stage for large-scale resort development, and can be developed and operated in a biodiversity-friendly way (sustainable design and siting, cleaner operations, outreach to nature and communities). Are you involved in the promotion of sustainable tourism in sensitive ecosystems? What were the lessons learned from those experiences?

Regarding your response, there is no specific format and please feel free to send it in the language that you are more comfortable with. A couple of paragraphs and indications for further research are more than enough.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

**ANNEX II**  
**PARTIES AND EXPERTS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE REVIEW ON THE APPLICATION**  
**OF THE CBD GUIDELINES (2012)**

Chile	UNWTO- Experiencia chilena de aplicación de los lineamientos del convenio sobre diversidad biológica en los ámbitos del desarrollo turístico – Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo
Egypt	CBD Notification 2012-105 - Biodiversity-friendly tourism practices, the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and cooperation with UNWTO - National Focal Point for CBD
Germany	Biodiversity-friendly tourism practices, the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and Cooperation with UN WTO – Response from Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of 28 August 2012
Ghana	UNWTO- Application of the CBD guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development – Response from Ministry of Tourism - 25 July 2012
Israel	UNWTO- Survey on the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development
Korea	Sustainable Tourism in Republic of Korea – Response from Ministry of Environment of Republic of Korea
Mauritius	Input for the production of COP11 pre-session documentation – Response from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - 23 August 2012
Poland	UNWTO- Application of the CBD guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development – Response from Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland - 31 July 2012
South Africa	UNWTO- Preliminary comments on the application of the CBD guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development – Response from National Department of Tourism - 10 August 2012
Peru	Directrices del Convenio de Diversidad Biológica sobre el desarrollo del turismo y la diversidad biológica –Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y Turismo - 16 August 2012
UK	Biodiversity-friendly tourism practices, the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and cooperation with UNWTO - Response from UK Government
USA	Submission by the United States of America - U.S. Views on Biodiversity-Friendly Tourism Practices, the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and Cooperation with UNWTO-13 August 2012

**Specialists/Experts**

Anna Spenceley	IUCN Specialist Group TAPAS
Ariane Janer	EcoBrazil – Brazilian Ecotourism Association
Carol Lobo	Semeia (Brazilian NGO)
Helena Rey	UNEP DTIE
Giulia Carbone	IUCN Secretariat
Glen T. Hvenegaard, PhD	University of Alberta
Dr. Paul F. J. Eagles	University of Waterloo
Dr. Peter Prokosch	UNEP/GRID-Arendal
Ronald Sanabria	Rainforest Alliance
Thomas Meller	MARTI/Mexico



## **Annex III**

### **List of Acronyms**

CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity

CBT - Community-Based-Tourism

COP - Conference of the Parties

DCC - Danube Competence Center

FFEM - Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial

GSTC - Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

ICS - Island Conservation Society

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature

IUCN-TAPAS - IUCN's Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group

NGO - Non-Governmental Organizations

NPS - USA National Park Service

MARTI - MesoAmerican Reef Tourism Initiative

SCBD – Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

ST-EP - Sustainable Tourism – Elimination of Poverty

TEEB – The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity

UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNCCD - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNWTO - World Tourism Organization

WTTC - World Travel & Tourism Council

WCPA - World Commission on Protected Area